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ABSTRACT

Twelve disadvantaged behavior problem youth were interviewed, observed, and evaluated in a case study approach to determine whether their abilities could be termed gifted and talented. Among measures used were the Renzulli Rating Scale, school records, teacher evaluations, parent interviews, peer evaluation, and observations of psychomotor and arts abilities. Among findings were that the Renzulli Scale is a good indicator of characteristics for gifted and talented youth, and that parent interviews provided insight into early development, family status, and school experience. Evaluation forms and data are included. Eight recommendations are made, including that schools develop a more responsive attitude and curriculum for gifted students who may be disadvantaged, curlturally different, or underachievers. Individual case summaries are reported. (CL)

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TITLE: An investigation of the relationship between the abilities of troubled youth and the degree to which these abilities could be termed gifted and talented.

TEACHER CORPS PROJECT: The Barre Project

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Problem Statement:

Part I

To what degree do troubled youth exhibit abilities that could be termed gifted and talented?

Part II

What are the skills that educators, both teachers and group home leaders, need to help prevent gifted and talented learners from becoming troubled youth? What is the role of the school? What is the role of the parents and group home leaders?

Rationale:

There is evidence that traits, abilities and behaviors that are termed gifted and talented do exist in every strata of society and among every racial and cultural group. The U.S. Office of Gifted and Talented had mandated that at least 50% of their funding be used with populations that are termed disadvantaged; culturally different and underachievement, have all been considered. In Vermont our differences would be based on rural isolation and low socio-economic status rather than racial differences. Cultural differences are also based on socio-economic differences. Accompanying the cultural aspect of differences are those related to linguistic aspects having to do with a French-Canadian culture. Some other language elements may include Italian-American culturals in the granite related industries of central Vermont.

Often the notion of gifted and talented behavior as well as gifted and talented programming has been associated with the upper socio-economic strata of our society and has incurred the negative connotation of "elitism." Hence, part of the focus of this study is to build evidence to refruit this biased opinion of gifted and talented education. And to set about to prove that elements of giftedness do indeed exist in areas of our society were a casual observer would doubt their presence.

Recent research of giftedness has included a broader definition. This expanded concept moves beyond intelligence testing toward the inclusion of such areas as leadership ability and psychomotor skills. The six areas of gifted and talented education now include:

1. General intellectual ability
2. Specific academic aptitude
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership ability
5. Visual and performing arts
6. Psychomotor ability

Therefore, some of these traits may be inherent and may be nurtured within the students who have alienated themselves from public education. An underlying premise is that some educational settings require the learner to conform to a standard that is contrary to their view of learning. In a study conducted by French and Garden (1968) the conclusion stated that male drop outs were more uninhibited than male non-drop outs and fought the strong pressures of the school for them to conform. The personality profile of the drop outs did not suggest that they rejected learning but indicated instead that the conforming nature of the school setting may have created a stumbling block for them. These students often displayed manifestations of bravado or studied laziness or defiance in order to protect a self-image. (Please note all students in this study are male.)

In a study conducted by Freerson (1965) he noted major differences in interest and attitude with the students of lower socio-economic status. Their personality, interests and home influences varied from their counterparts from the high socio-economic status. Their behavior was more action oriented and they did less reading. Similarly, Karnes, et. al. (1965) noted these lower socio-economic level students performed academically substantially lower than predicted achievement levels. This tendency seemed directly attributed to greater family tension in these families. (Please note the case studies included in this study.)

Captan's (1973) study showed students highly motivated and skilled in areas that ensured their social sufficiency and survival in their environment. These traits included hustling, body language, gang leadership, conniving, and fighting. These same traits produce failure in school and in the job market. E. Paul Torrance developed a list of characteristics

that he found in gifted disadvantaged youngsters. These characteristics include: rich and expressive informal speech, ability in music and movement, leadership in small groups, humor, originality, and fluency and flexibility in non-verbal media.

This study endeavored to find which characteristics and traits these students possessed. Then when these are known, what to do for the continued education of these students as well as what recommendations could be made to schools generally to enable preventative procedures which will curtail future drop outs and troubled youth.

Methodology:

Some preliminary work was done with the professional members of this study to increase awareness concerning a broadened view of giftedness. (Please see the attached Philosophical Statement by Helene Lang.)

An up-to-date view of giftedness was shared and discussed with the people involved with working with the troubled youth. Ways of observing the students as well as how to use the rating scales increased the professionals ability to see potential as well as demonstrated gifts and talents. Many discussion sessions were held in order to develop some commonality of definition concerning what constitutes giftedness as well as what schools and homes can do to provide for these abilities.

The youths were interviewed, observed and evaluated in a case study approach using some or all of the following measures:

1) The Renzulli Rating Scale.

2) School records including previous testing and grades. (No new formal testing was used at this time. It was felt by the principal investigator to be counter-productive with a student sample already alienated to schools and formal structures.)

3) Teacher evaluation.

4) Parent interviews. (Orignially the group home leader's evaluation was to be included. However, only one youth was residing in a group home at the time of the study. His group home leader knew little about him because of the recency of his residence in the home.)

5) Peer evaluation was used because research shows that peer evaluation tends to be a more accurate evaluator than adult evaluation. This is especially true in areas such as leadership, the social intelligence.

6) Observations about psychomotor and arts abilities were made by the teachers who had an opportunity to see students performance in art classes and in the work program.

7) The creative and productive thought areas were evaluated informally by teacher observation. Some were noted on the Renzulli Scale as well.

Findings:

Please see attached chart.

Analysis of the investigation leads to the following findings:

1) The Renzulli Scale is a good indicator of characteristics for gifted and talented youth. Note especially Subjects 1. T.C., 2. R.H., and 4. A.K.. Leadership, Precision of Communication and Planning Characteristics seem especially high areas for these students. Creativity is noteworthy since it becomes one of the major areas of emphasis in a broader definition of giftedness.

2) Very little data on previous school records was made available. Repeated requests were made for previous intelligence test scores and previous achievement test scores. Only two students had reported scores on the Woodcock Reading Test and the Key Math Test. The reasons for this lack of information is not known. However, two theories are put forth. Perhaps because of funding procedures this information is not made available. Or there may indeed be a lack of available data on these students. They certainly have all the characteristics of kids who have "fallen through the cracks" in our public school system.

3) It would follow that teacher comments would agree in part with the Renzulli Scale data since the same teachers responded in both instances. During my informal visits with the professional staff there were many instances of commonality in their observations as well as the more formal check lists and more formal write-up. This collaborates the data.

4) The parent interviews provided insight into early development, family status, previous and present school experience, and highlighted traits of behavior.

5) The Peer Evaluation forms revealed strongly that T.C. had many of the traits evidenced in earlier data from this study. However, please note the relative lack of peer support for R.H. and A.K.. Because peer evaluation is so strongly heralded as an identification tool for gifted and talented students these responses should be given much consideration.

5 and 7) These areas which are so important for identifying the disadvantaged learner were able to yield practical evidence through the Renzulli Scale, Teacher Evaluations and Parent Interviews.

One major difficulty of the educational setting was its lack of musical and dramatic programs. Although the art program does exist it too is limited. In the areas of psychomotor skills there is also a lack of opportunity.

. RENZULLI SCALE FOR RATING BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERIOR STUDENTS

ubject	Age	Sex	Learning Characteristics	Motivational Characteristics	Creativity Characteristics	Leadership Characteristics	Artistic Characteristics	Musical Characteristics
. T.C.	16	M	19	24	27	35	28	17
. R.H.	14	M	20	20	20	25	32	NA
. J.H.	--	M	--	--	--	--	--	--
. A.K.	16	M	22	32	34	25	NA	15
. H.M.	--	M	15	15	15	19	31	NA
. T.P.	--	M	--	--	--	--	--	--
. Ti.Pi.	14	M	16	14	22	25	24	NA
. J.P.	--	M	14	21	21	15	32	NA
. R.P.	--	M	19	16	13	22	19	NA
. R.Q.	--	M	12	18	12	18	28	NA
. T.M.	--	M	--	--	--	--	--	--
. S.S.	--	M	--	--	--	--	--	--

. Renzulli Scale - Continued

	Dramatic Characteristics	Communication Precision	Communication Expressiveness	Planning Characteristics
1. T.C.	29	28	8	46
2. R.H.	28	31	10	37
3. J.H.	--	--	--	--
4. A.K.	28	28	11	37
5. H.M.	15	19	9	32
6. T.P.	--	--	--	--
7. Ti.Pi.	NA	17	14	29
8. J.P.	15	20	7	25
9. R.P.	13	22	9	22
10. R.Q.	13	18	8	22
11. T.M.	--	--	--	--
12. S.S.	--	--	--	--

II. SCHOOL RECORDS

	WOODCOCK READING	KEY MATH
1. T.C.	---	9+
2. R.H.	12.3	10.0
3. J.H.	---	---
4. A.K.	---	---
5. H.M.	---	---
6. T.P.	---	---
7. Ti.Pi.	---	---
8. J.P.	---	---
9. R.P.	---	---
10. R.Q.	---	---
11. T.M.	---	---
12. S.S.	---	---

III. SUMMARY OF TEACHER COMMENTS (See attached also)

1.	T.C.	Commands respect of peers and adults. Is intelligent and thoughtful.
2.	R.H.	Enthusiastic and sophisticated curiosity
3.	J.H.	----------
4.	A.K.	Keen sense of justice.
5.	H.M.	----------
6.	T.P.	----------
7.	Ti.Pi.	Strong leadership qualities uniformly directed in negative directions.
8.	J.P.	----------
9.	R.P.	----------
10.	R.Q.	----------
11.	T.M.	----------
12.	S.S.	----------

IV. SUMMARY OF PARENT INTERVIEWS (Please see complete write-up)

Subject:

1. T.C.	Rural isolation. Mother protective, Father competitive. Loner, poor school situation. learning disabled, reader, self-taught. Talent in electronics.
2. R.H.	Supportive family. Father died when R.H. was young. Average grades until grade seven when disliked school. Attention to detail and specifics. Good communication skills. Well-organized, caring person.
3. J.H.	
4. A.K.	
5. H.M.	
6. T.P.	
7. Ti.Pi.	Resides with grandmother, disruptive life, divorce. Truancy and dislike for school. Wise guy and sarcastic, stubborn. Leader with peers. Seems more academically able. Knows a lot about a lot of things.
8. J.P.	
9. R.P.	
10. R.Q.	
11. T.M.	
12. S.S.	

(All others blank. Have only 3 case studies)

V. PEER EVALUATION (See attached copy of form used)

Subject	Item 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. T.C.	3	1	5		3	5	2	4		4
2. R.H.				2			1			
3. J.H.				3						
4. A.K.	1						2		1	2
5. H.M.									2	
6. T.P.										
7. TiPi	1	3								
8. J.P.										
9. R.P.									1	
10. R.Q.										
11. T.M.	1									
12. S.S.							1			

PLEASE SEE THE RENZULLI SCALE, TEACHER EVALUATIONS, AND PARENT INTERVIEWS FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO THESE AREAS.

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Recommendations:

As a result of this study it is recommended that:

1) With a broader definition of giftedness that students be recognized for their unique gifts and talents even though the student does not conform to schools as we know them.

2) Schools develop a more responsive attitude and more responsive curriculum to meet the needs of gifted students who may be disadvantaged, culturally different and/or underachievers. Educational personnel, teachers and administrators need to know the nature of any cultural differences. They need to focus on techniques and methods that encourage motivation and that stress special student strength, such as visual perception, while avoiding areas of relative weakness, such as verbal or linguistic facility. One specific recommendation is for much fuller use of the resources of the total community.

Program adjustments for the culturally different gifted developed by Riessman (1965) include: characteristics of visual and physical learning rather than aural, content centered curriculum rather than form centered, external orientation rather than introspective aspects of learning, problem centered rather than abstract centered, approaches that are slow, patient, and careful rather than quick and clever, and finally, a need for structure and control but with genuine care for the gifted learner.

3) Schools will utilize the knowledge that parents can provide background information and continued support for their children's learning. Develop much better home-school relations early in the students program as a preventative measure against dropping out and alienation from schools.

4) Schools make greater use of peer identification and peer support for the gifted learner. This natural leadership tendency needs channeling in more productive directions.

5) Schools provide a more enriched curriculum to accommodate the psychomotor, artistic and musical talents of these students.

6) Schools continue with the highly individualized case-study approach with these learners. But continue towards the assimilating of their program into a regular program, regular school or regular job. There is need to be part of the mainstream as well as gifted.

7) Schools provide access to specialized materials to fulfill special needs. (The Boston Field trip is an excellent example of this.)

8) There will be continued in-service training and workshops for teachers and other educational personnel on methods and approaches to working with the gifted. This could help prevent future troubled youth who possess gifts and talents which otherwise may become misdirected.

Attachment A

A Philosophical Statement About Gifted and Talented Education

by
Helene Lang

Definition: During earlier times in American education, the recognition for gifted learning was that of high academic ability based on intelligence as measured by intelligence tests. In the late seventies, the view of gifted education has been broadened to include the terms gifted and talented. Beyond the terminology in the title, is a real and significant broadening of the definition to include more than intelligence.

Six components are identified as comprising Gifted and Talented ability. The six are:

1) General Intellectual Ability
2) Specific Academic Aptitude
3) Creative or Productive Thinking
4) Leadership Ability
5) Visual and Performing Arts
6) Psychomotor Ability

Special note should be made of numbers 3,4, and 6 because they especially indicate a broadened view of giftedness. The creative learner, with more divergent thinking ability which is sometimes called "social intelligence," is especially necessary when our society seems to be lacking in true leadership ability. Likewise, the Psychomotor Ability (called practical intelligence) seems especially needed in times of dwindling resources when "doers" as well as "thinkers" are necessary.

Identification: In addition to a broader definition of Gifted and Talented, there are broader identification procedures including tests, behavior rating scales, performance evaluations, measures of creativity, juried evaluations, biographical inventories, and culture fair tests. The methods of identification lend themselves to a widespread talent search far beyond the earlier, more limiting identification procedure of intelligence testing.

Myths: Because teacher preparation, schooling generally, and instructional materials have been geared to meet the needs of the "average" students. It cannot be assumed that the gifted are provided for in our schools.

An erroneous myth exists with the belief that the gifted will succeed anyway. Several studies (Green, Tettle, Gallagher, and Simpson) indicate that "unrecognized" and "unprovided for" students perform below level for their grade and their potential, are poorly motivated and frustrated, or drop out

of school completely. At best, only average growth takes place rather than reaching a more fulfilling potential. Finally, the recognition of the gifted individual is not harmful socially, emotionally, or physically if the program is designed to help him/her to achieve full potential.

Needs:

Several concerns have emerged from parents, students themselves, teachers, concerned citizens, legislators, curriculum developers, and social agencies to develop programs to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners.

The College of Education, University of Vermont, is responding to these concerns by improving its resources to aid teachers and students. Resources are in the form of materials (both professional and curriculum). In the areas of pre-service and in-service training for teachers, administrators, and counselors the needs of gifted and talented learners will be more readily met. As those who work with children and young people become more adept at identification and programming for the gifted and talented learner, there will be improved service to this population. In every strata of society, whether affluent or disadvantaged, or culturally different, are gifted students waiting to be helped. We have a responsibility to this group of learners just as well as our responsibility to respond to all learners.

We should not overlook the gifted and talented as an excuse to serve in a "democratic" way. During the Lincoln-Douglas (June, 1857) debates, Abraham Lincoln stated that the Declaration of Independence "did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects." It did provide for equality of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but not in the areas of "color, size, intellect, moral development, or social capacity."

Bertrand Russell is quoted "The feeling that it is undemocratic to single out our best pupils is one which leads to great waste of good materials."

As a College of Education, we should strive for excellence in teaching and while on this quest, as well as serving the needs of all learners, we can serve the needs of our most able learners - the gifted and talented.

Attachment B

PEER IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THE NAME OF THE CLASSMATE WHOM YOU WOULD PICK FOR THE FOLLOWING:

1. WHO SEEMS TO KNOW THE MOST ABOUT A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS?
2. IF YOU NEEDED HELP IN MATH, WHOM WOULD YOU ASK?
3. IF YOU WERE LOST IN A STRANGE PLACE, WHO WOULD BE BEST AT FIGURING OUT WHAT TO DO?
4. YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO ENTER A SKATEBOARD COMPETITION. WHOM WOULD YOU PICK TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR SKATEBOARD GO THE FASTEST?
5. WHO KNOWS THE MOST ABOUT SCIENTIFIC THINGS LIKE THE PLANETS, INSECTS, SPACE FLIGHT, ELECTRICITY, AND HOW MACHINES WORK?
6. YOUR SCHOOL IS HAVING AN ART SHOW. WHO WILL PROBABLY SHOW THE BEST PICTURE OR SCULPTURE?
7. WHO WOULD BE BEST AT READING AN EXCITING MYSTERY STORY TO THE CLASS?
8. WHO SHOULD BE CLASS PRESIDENT BECAUSE HE OR SHE USUALLY GETS EVERYBODY TO WORK TOGETHER AND CAN GET THINGS DONE?
9. YOUR CLASS IS PUTTING ON A MUSICAL PLAY FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL. WHO SHOULD HAVE A ROLE IN THE PLAY?
10. WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO REPRESENT YOUR CLASS IN A DEBATING COMPETITION ON TOPICS LIKE NEWS ITEMS, POLLUTION, THE ENERGY CRISIS, OR THE POPULATION EXPLOSION?

Adapted from a questionnaire developed by Marie Cooney, Director of Elementary Education, Irvington Public Schools

It is difficult for me to choose a specific situation in which T.C. demonstrated unusual skill and talent. He always commands the respect of peers and adults who interact with him; he is both intelligent and thoughtful.

One day at group meeting, we were discussing a couple of specific problems kids were having getting along. T.C. was not directly involved, and remained quiet. The situation was getting heated and difficult and T.C. was asked for his opinion. His response ended the discussion in a positive way that no staff could have accomplished. He said, "It seems to me that none of us is perfect. We all need to learn to get along here so that we can help each other become better people."

When on a class trip to Boston, R.H. displayed an unusually enthusiastic and sophisticated curiosity. At the science museum he was intent on reading about and fully understanding the various displays. The others sprinted from exhibit to exhibit, uttering an occasional "Oh, wow!" R.H., on the other hand, spent several minutes at each, and often asked questions and made comments that indicated an appreciation of the situation. This curiosity was alos applied to the geography, history, and architecture of the Boston area.

A.K. has always harbored a keen sense of justice. This was best displayed when another student was punished for something that did not directly involve the school day. A. pursued the legal and moral responsibilities limitations relating to the issue of school personnel jurisdiction over students and actually helped us clarify our policies.

Although A.'s fervent search for the rightness or wrongness of any given situation often puts him in the middle of other people's business, it also often helps us all to see things more clearly and to arrive at more just solutions to our problems.

It's difficult for me to write positively about TiPi. For whatever reasons, TiPi's strong leadership qualities are uniformly directed in negative directions. For example, during our daily group meetings, his comments are derogatory, well-laced with obscenities - all for the benefit of his captive audience. His clever comments get excellent reviews, but always at the expense of the school, the teachers or any "underdog" student. He is very adept at translating all normal language into drug language (which is a major violation of the Project). Until he redirects his energy, I feel his eligibility as an exemplary person would be difficult to substantiate.

T.C. is a 16½ year-old male, residing at home in Cabot, Vermont with his mother, father, and four younger brothers. Tim attends the Barre Project in Montpelier, Vermont. Mr. C. is employed as a granite sculptor and Mrs. C. is a housewife.

T. was referred to the gifted and talented research project by Muffy Conlon, the education director of the Barre Street Project. While attending the Project, T. has displayed outstanding academic potential as well as creative drive and leadership ability. He scored very high in most areas of the Renzulli Peer evaluation instrument.

The following are the results of an interview with Mrs. C. which took place in her home on April 28, 1980.

T. is the oldest of five children, all males. There is a 2½ year age difference between T. and the next youngest sibling. There is only a sixteen month difference in ages between the two next youngest boys. The two youngest children are one year-old and two years old. Mrs. C. feels the gap in ages has helped to make T. feel estranged from his siblings. The babies are a team and the two older boys are a team. T. is often left out.

The family resides in Cabot, Vermont. Although the family now resides at an extremely isolated section of Cabot, they had until two years ago, lived in the village.

Mrs. C.'s relationship with T. appears to be that of "protector." She describes T. as having many emotional problems - which she attributes primarily to T.'s relationship with his father.

Mrs. C. describes her husband as an extremely competitive person who has always displayed strong competition toward T.. Mrs. C. stated that her husband has always viewed T. as a threat and never allowed the boy to win at anything. She went on to state that her husband does not understand T. and is often unwilling to discuss the problems which arise from T.'s behavior. Mrs. C. stated that her husband is extremely upset regarding T.'s use of Marijuana and alcohol. His mother feels that Marijuana probably helps T. cope with the domestic pressure and she does not seem to be concerned regarding T.'s use of drugs.

Mrs. C. noted that T. progressed developmentally through his early stages "on schedule." She noted nothing remarkable concerning his early years - 0-5.

Mrs. C. described T. as a loner. She stated that from a very early age he preferred to play by himself, even though there were many children available for T. to socialize with. She described T. as a very creative and innovative child. He loved to "tinker" with materials and build structures with his playthings.

Mrs. C. feels that T.'s problems in school began from his first day in the first grade. She felt the teachers in the Cabot School system were harsh and not suitable to work with very young children. T. was labeled as "slow and a troublemaker."

It wasn't until T. was in second grade that a hearing disability was discovered. Mrs. C. stated that in third grade T. was given a battery of tests and she was told T. had been found to have a learning disability. She stated that no one told her what type of learning disability was found, how it was determined or what could be done to compensate for it. She was merely told that T. was "slow" and would always have a problem learning like other children.

T. left Cabot High School when he was 16. He was unsuccessful in his attempts to secure employment so agreed to participate in the Barre Project.

His mother states that he has never had so much success in his life as he has felt at the Barre Project. She also related her fears and T.'s concern regarding his return to Cabot High School in the fall.

She described T.'s life now as happier and more content than it has ever been.

He spends a great deal of time reading. She stated he has always been interested in books and is a voluminous reader. T. has also taught himself to play the guitar, although recently has appeared to have lost interest in it.

Mrs. C. also stated that T. has a real talent for and knowledge of electronics. She is amazed at his ability to be able to take apart and reassemble almost anything involving electricity and the principles of electronics.

Problems

1. Hearing disability - undefined
2. Poor self-image
3. Poor relationship with father
4. Question of possible drug dependency
5. Family in conflict
6. Negative label within the Community
7. No sense of belonging to his nuclear family

Strengths

1. Self-starter; somewhat self-motivated
2. Good reading skills - enjoys reading
3. Question of strong artistic ability
4. Displayed and proven talent in electronics
5. Self-learner - taught self guitar
6. Increased positive feedback re: self and academic performance
7. Supportive, if not over-protective mother (could be a plus or minus)

R.H. is a 14 year-old boy, the middle child of three (sister 17, brother 9). He, siblings, and mother have lived in Montpelier (on Barre Street) for three years. The apartment appears small for four people, it is adequately furnished and neat. R.'s bed greets you as you open the front door - he has little, if no privacy. P.H. reports she is attempting to move in the near future - the cost of apartments hinders the move. P. would like to move so she can be licensed for day care - she currently takes care of three children - "I love to take care of little ones."

P. had difficulty remembering specifics about R.'s development. She does feel that he has always been an exceptional child - based on her experience with other's children. He was a healthy baby and had no outstanding illnesses or afflictions. P. said R. started walking and talking early - at about 11 months. He was always larger than those his own age - height as well as weight - "he was like a little butterball." R. is currently about 5'7", 180 pounds. He is overweight, but P. reports as he grows taller he is starting to become better proportioned. She attributed his weight to the fact that her whole family is large.

R. started kindergarten in Rutland. P. said he wasn't crazy about school - he was a homebody and particularly loved spending time with his father. During the first year of school, Mr. H. died. This prompted P. to move to Barre, closer to relatives. The death seems to have been devastating for all family members - P. reports she went through some particularly difficult times accepting the death, and had a lot of personal issues to deal with.

Meanwhile, R. had entered the first grade in the Barre School system. P. remembers R. having particulary difficult times with his peers - constantly getting into fights and getting beat up. She reports that school officials called her frequently and told her how difficult it was for a new child to make it in an established neighborhood school. In addition to this, P. felt that the death of his father and being chubby affected R.'s behavior. She doesn't remember she or the school taking any special measures to deal with R.'s difficulties. P. said she's not sure how the school could have handled things differently. R. did seem to do "OK" academically. At home he always managed to keep himself busy and amused. Again, she emphasized that he was larger than the other kids his age.

In sixth grade, the H.'s moved to Montpelier and R. attended the Barre Street School. P. stated he continued to have difficulty with his peers but not as many fights. R. was a person who had one friend at a time. Grades continued to be what P. considers average.

Seventh and eighth grade is where the difficulties started to accelerate. Attendance was irregular and R. disliked school immensely. P. said he could do all the work but only completed what he wanted to. This attitude went hand-in-hand with his behavior at home. P. said he became continually more unmanageable - doing as he pleased. He did not get into any known delinquency. By eighth grade he was hardly attending school and eventually refused to go - period. P. said she was at a loss about what to do. She said R. had always talked about wanting to be an electrician or work with electronics, like his dad, but no matter how much she emphasized the need for an education, R. refused to attend school. P. said she felt helpless about forcing R. to go to school - "he was too big." After several meetings, R. started school at the Barre Project in December. He has continued on a regular basis and takes the responsibility for getting himself there. P. reports that he is quite happy and has stated that if he can't attend next year he will refuse to go to school. This is apparently one of the few places R. has met with success both academically and socially.

P. could not pinpoint any of R.'s strengths or weaknesses. She commented that he is a very generous and giving person. He doesn't talk a great deal about things but P. stated that if someone doesn't understand a particular point, R. will explain it in great detail. I have also observed him in situations where he is asking questions - they are very specific and he seems to be paying very close attention - good eye contact and comments/questions that would reflect he is listening. Although he is a little shy, he appears to have good communication skills.

"R. is definitely a follower not a leader." He seems to have the ability and I have seen other students at the project ask R. for assistance. He is not assertive or aggressive. P. feels R. is not lazy. Lately, he likes to watch TV, but usually he keeps himself busy. He enjoys tinkering - taking things apart and fixing them. He repairs most things at the house. During our meeting, R. was on the front porch repairing his bike so he could get himself to a job interview - arranged by the Project. He was pressed for time, but replaced parts quickly and accurately. He said he learned how to repair his bike by himself and said he enjoys doing those kind of things.

R. seems to be well organized. At school he's on time and gets to task as scheduled. His space at home would also indicate he is organized. Although P. says he hates making his bed and picking up clothes he has car pictures neatly arranged on the walls and his "stuff" neatly organized and arranged. R. also seems able to retain information. P. feels he can do most anything - but has a passive-stubborn side and only completes/starts what he wants to do.

T.P. is a 14 year-old boy. He is the second oldest in a family of five boys. T. and his siblings have recently moved in, on a somewhat permanent basis, with R.C., their maternal grandmother. They live in Waterbury, which is where T. has spent the majority of his years living and going to school. During eighth grade, T., his brothers, and mother lived in Morrisville.

T.'s parents are divorced. His father lives somewhere in the area and mother has not been seen for the last few weeks. She was having such a difficult time taking care of herself and the five boys, who range in age from 15 to 9, that she has left, leaving their care up to the grandmother. R. said she is trying to get custody of all five boys - "I've raised them most of the time anyway."

R. owns a home on Main Street in Waterbury. It is a large, well-kept home and houses R., her two sons (who have yet to complete high school), four community care patients from the State Hospital, and now T. and his four siblings. R. said it was a houseful but everyone seems to be getting along fine. For the record - T.'s oldest brother - 15 years - does not attend school and is on probation.

From what R. had to say, it seems that T. and his siblings have had a pretty disruptive life. R. says her daughter, P., is not a very strong person and was pretty ineffective at disciplining the boys on her own. "She didn't know how to say "no" to them."

In regards to T., R. reports that she remembers him doing OK in school up until they moved to Morrisville. Here, he repeatedly skipped school and became a nuisance to the administration. She could not recollect early grades, accomplishments, or attendance records. After the bad year in Morrisville, the P.'s moved back to Waterbury. In September, T. started at Harwood Union High School. He had a lot of problems here between attendance and "being a wise guy." He was asked to leave school in the early fall, and, at this point, started attending the Barry Project. R. is not very pleased with Harwood Union. She is not sure what the problem is, but reports that both of her sons dropped out of Harwood after having done will in Waterbury. R. does hope that T. will be able to attend Harwood next year - after having had an OK year at the Barre Project.

R. describes T. as being a wise guy. "He likes to be sarcastic and is very good at it." This trait has been witnessed at the Barre Project. R. says that T. can be really delightful and is a good worker. She doesn't feel that he will make much of himself though, because he's just like his father. He has to learn everything the hard way and frequently never learns from his mistakes. "He's very stubborn."

T. is quite the leader amongst his peers at the Barre Project. As far as friends go, R. says he spends most of his time with older people. "He has always spent more time talking with older people than kids his age." R. feels academically T. is able to perform better than he does, he just doesn't seem to be interested. She also says he seems to know a lot about a lot of different things.